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ABSTRACT

Designed for use as supplementary instructional material in a cultural anthropology course, this learning module introduces the student to various theoretical perspectives, terms, and influential figures within the field of anthropology. The following historical and conceptual influences on anthropological theory are discussed: (1) the Greek tradition; (2) the Roman tradition; (3) the Islamic tradition; (4) the age of exploration; (5) the beginnings of ethnographic museums and societies in the 19th century; (6) Marx's contributions to anthropological theory related to economic determinism, cultural evolution, and the following cultural components: technological/economic system, social organization, and ideological base; (7) Franz Boas and his modified natural science model; (8) 20th century structural functionalism and the work of B. Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown; (9) French structuralism and the work of Claude Levi-Strauss; (10) Alfred L. Kroeber; (11) 20th century cross-cultural studies and the conception of universal behavior patterns; (12) Margaret Mead; (13) Gregory Bateson; (14) Robert Redfield; and (15) Oscar Lewis. Finally, performance activities covering the module's content are presented. (LAL)

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Anthropological Theory

A Modular Approach

Cultural Anthropology

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

WHAT ARE THEY
DOING? I WISH
THEY'D QUIT FOLLOWING
ME AROUND...



Introduction:

This module has been prepared as a guide to a specific area within Cultural Anthropology. Your task will be to read the materials, perform the tasks at the end of the module, and to cross check your answers with the information in the module upon completion of the performance activities. It will be your responsibility to keep up with the reading assignments in the textbook, and to take lecture notes, and film notes.

The module is designed to give you a basis for mastering a specific amount of information, and has been field tested with over 1000 students who have demonstrated by their performance on examinations, that the modular approach can increase the probability of student mastery. The theoretical perspective which is employed is based upon cognitive psychology, gestalt psychology, behaviorism and programmed learning.

Anthropological theory is both an historical and conceptual area of interest to anthropologists. In the historical sense, anthropology is the product of prior researchers and their contributions to the field. Because the discipline is relatively small, the impact that some anthropologists have had in this century is enormous. At the same time, theoretical perspectives are the product of cultural influences, thus the impact of norms have helped to create the discipline. Numerous concepts, terms, and figures of note are introduced to the student in this module.

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

Curiosity about human similarities and differences serves as the basis for all anthropology. A desire to examine is found throughout the range of cultural complexity. When descriptions are formulated which tell about the customs, traditions, beliefs and habits of a people, something very close to cultural anthropology occurs. Many researchers consider cultural anthropology to be a part of the folk-tradition of all groups; others attribute the development to a specific set of historical events. A discipline is more than a mere term: it is composed of various philosophical perspectives through which observations can be ordered, and correlations and comparisons developed.

The Greek Tradition

The various theoretical perspectives within anthropology evolved over a long period. ARISTOTLE used the term anthropology to describe the study of what he believed was the underlying moral nature of man. Contemporary anthropologists would not readily accept this as an accurate definition, but would acknowledge the tremendous importance of Aristotle's work, and his contributions to the development of anthropological knowledge. Another Greek, one raised in a Greco-Persian culture, developed descriptions of exotic cultures. HERODOTUS is considered one of the

pioneers of cultural description. Some attribute to him the founding of history, geography and anthropology as academic disciplines. Because very little about the larger world was known to the Greeks, they tended to assume that their own behavior patterns were the only valid ones. They looked upon variations in cultural behavior as entertaining oddities. Herodotus recorded and transmitted descriptions of the customs, habits and everyday lives of non-Greek peoples. In doing so, he managed to elude the ethnocentric perspective which contaminated the work of most of his contemporaries. However, within his time period, he was generally regarded as a collector of amusing customs rather than as a scholar.

The Roman Tradition

There is a general paucity of cultural description in Roman literature, probably because the Romans were far more interested in engineering and military science than in anthropology. However, some of the descriptions of Germanic tribes contained in the major Roman Chronicles indicate that although the Romans lacked a fully developed anthropological perspective, some ethnographic materials were recorded. Ultimately the lack of knowledge about the non-Roman world contributed to Rome's eventual collapse.

The Islamic Tradition

During the Dark Ages following the collapse of the Roman Empire, cultural description in the West diminished

significantly. The same was not true in the Arabic world. Arab scholars were far more advanced than their Western counterparts. Many of the achievements of the Islamic world during this period can be attributed to the high level of knowledge and exploration which was encouraged. The momentum for recording information about different cultures came from both secular and religious directions. Cultural chronicles provided useful information for furthering economic and political power. The considerable travel and ethnographic activity of Islamic missionaries added significantly to the Arabs' knowledge about diverse groups.

The following excerpt from IBN FADHLAN's account of the Viking settlers of Kiev has survived since A.D. 988. It is representative of the quality of research conducted by Islamic scholars, contains valuable ethnographic information, and ranks on a par with contemporary ethnographic accounts:

Page 80. -- He says, I have seen the Rusiya when they came hither on their trading voyages and had encamped by the river Atil. I have never seen people with a more developed bodily stature than they. They are tall as date palms, blond and ruddy so that they do not need to wear either a qurtaq nor a Kaftan; rather the men among them wear a garment (kisa) which only covers the half of his body and leaves one of his hands free.

Page 31. -- Each one of them has an axe, a sword and a knife with him and all of these whom we have mentioned never let themselves be separated from their weapons. Their swords are broad bladed, provided with rills and of Frankish type.

Each one of them has from the edge of his nails to the neck figures and trees and other things tattooed in dark green.

Page 82. -- Each of the women has fastened upon the two

breasts a brassiere (hugga of iron, silver, copper or gold) in weight and value according to the wealth of her husband. Each brassiere has a ring (halqa) to which a knife is likewise fixed and is dependent upon the breast. Around the neck the women wear rings of gold and silver. For the man, if he possesses ten thousand dirhems, has a neck ring made for his wife; if he has twenty thousand in his possession then he has two neck rings made for her. And so his wife receives another neck ring with the addition of each ten thousand dirhems. Accordingly it often happens that there are a number of neck rings upon the neck of one of them. The most highly prized ornaments are considered by them the green glass beads (lit. coral), made out of clay which are found in the ships. They bargain for these beads and buy a bead for a dirhem apiece and string them into necklaces for their women. (Robert Blake and Richard Frye, Observations on the Manners and Customs of the Northmen Encamped on the Volga, New York, 1947, Fasc. 2. in press. Reprinted and taken from: A Reader in General Anthropology, ed. Carleton S. Coon. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1948.)

The Age of Exploration

COMMERCE and WAR were the primary vehicles for increased Western contact with the East. General curiosity about the strange customs of other societies was heightened by the descriptions and narratives of soldiers, travelers and invaders. A pragmatic need to learn about other lands and cultures was the key factor in stimulating the re-emergence of cultural recording. Contact with Oriental invaders and Arabic cultures highlighted the cultural isolation of most of most of the Western world, and helped to create a climate wherein the gathering of information about the larger world was encouraged. The Western VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY heightened interest in other lands. Again, the motive was usually to seek political, commercial or religious advantage. The journals, notebooks, diaries and correspondence of

explorers, missionaries and soldiers of this time contain descriptions of some groups which did not survive sustained contact with the West. The following excerpt from the writings of the noted priest BERNADINO DE SAHAGUN illustrates how cultural projection can influence the description of a culture. In this chronicle, Aztec beliefs have been altered and molded to the pattern of the observer. The roles of the Aztec priests appear to mirror the roles which were appropriate for priests in Spanish society. Thus this description tells more about Father De Sahagun and his view of the world than it does about the reality of Aztec priesthood:

It is also said that this goddess or these goddesses had the power to produce lust; that they could provoke carnal intercourse and favored illicit love affairs, and that after such sins had been committed, they also held the power of pardoning and cleansing them of the sin, forgiving them if they confessed them to their satrapas (priests), who were the soothsayers who kept the books of divination and of the fate of the newly born, of witchcraft and prognostication as well as of ancient traditions, which were transmitted from mouth to mouth from the ancients down to them.

When a penitent was ready for confession, he would at once go in search of one of these priests or divines to whom they were wont to confess, saying to him: "Sir, I want to go to god almighty who is the protector of all...for I want to speak in secret of my sins." Hearing this, the Satrapa would answer: "Be very welcome, my son, for what you say you wish to do is for your salvation and advantage." After saying this he would at once consult his book of divination which was called Tonalamatl, in order to find out by this book what day would be the most opportune for such a deed. As soon as he had found the propitious day, he would say: "Come on such and such a day, for on that day the sign is favorable to do this successfully." When the appointed day had come for the penitent to return he would buy a new mat (petate), white incense which they call copalli, and wood for the fire, over which the copalli was to be burned. (taken from: A History of Ancient Mexico, trans. F. Bandelier Fisk. University Press, Nashville, 1932.)

The majority of Father De Sahagun's records have not survived. They generally did not go beyond mere description; theory in even a most rudimentary form was usually lacking.

Those who are concerned about an "objective description" of culture must remember that a bias free or distortion free description is a relatively recent idea. In fact it is possible to argue that "objectivity" is "subjective" in that the researcher has selected a preference--neutrality. The language of neutrality can convey a distinct impression of a situation which may not be accurate. The major difficulty with descriptions from missionaries, explorers and the like is that they sometimes were self-serving; they justified or rationalized the presence of the observer in a strange culture. Thus, the reader is sometimes treated to a rendition which glorifies or distorts the observer's role, and lacks the real details of life for the group described.

The academic and intellectual caliber of the early Jesuit explorers and missionaries was frequently superior to that of most other explorers, missionaries and soldiers. As a direct consequence, Jesuit journals tend to be less involved in self-aggrandizement, and are generally more descriptive. Intriguingly, because of their intense academic training and secure belief system, many Jesuits were openly sympathetic to the groups they were living with and recording. Most other early chroniclers did not have a central, multi-national repository for their journals and diaries. Thus the JESUIT RELATIONS, which contain descriptions

compiled by Jesuit explorers, soldiers and missionaries, are particularly important and useful to contemporary anthropologists. Such surviving descriptions are particularly significant because many societies ceased to exist following contact with Western civilization.

The 19th Century

Early in the 19th Century, increasing numbers of scholars began to openly question the so-called "grand design" of the world. Secular strides in science, commerce, industry, technology and medicine gave impetus to the development of new philosophies which rejected the "divine order" explanations of phenomena. During the 19th Century, descriptions of cultures were collected and stored in libraries of universities, and in what were then called ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS. Societies of ethnographers formed in Germany, France and England, and modern anthropology began. Information about the peoples and cultures of colonized areas were collected and compared. Discussions ensued about the relative antiquity of human populations, and new theories to explain cultural diversity were created.

Some people were attracted to these ethnographic societies out of curiosity; others joined for more pragmatic reasons. Political power at the time was measured in terms of the geographic area and population controlled. Government leaders began to realize that knowledge about non-western people might be valuable in controlling territory and people. Anthropology became linked with colonialism,

primarily through governmental and commercial sponsorship.

The following excerpt from a lengthy Russian field study conducted in Alaska is an excellent example of governmentally commissioned 19th Century ethnographic and geographic research. At the time of the study, the author, Lt. Zagoskin, was traveling in Russian America. The ethnographic quality of his work is superior, and meets the standards of contemporary ethnographic research.

Men's evening party, October 12, 1842, in the same village: The arrangement and lighting of the Kazhim were the same as on the previous evening. One of the women, a shaman, led the chorus. Some of them in the songs named their Russian acquaintances and urged them to hand out tobacco, rings, etc. But nonetheless there was a certain discord observable among them, as everywhere among women: either they sat wrong, or the drums were beaten out of rhythm. Before the beginning of the play, the men in the firepit sang in chorus that the catch was poor, as was hunting and trading, that they had nothing to offer, but that perhaps with a dance they could console their wives. To this the women answered that they already knew that their husbands were lazy, that they just steam themselves and smoke pipes, but that they never imagined that they could be such stay-at-homes that on the occasion of the very first evening party they should have saved up nothing for refreshments--in this case it would be better for everyone to go home and sleep. The men answered that they were going off to hunt, and after this one man came out of the firepit.... The dancer, dressed in a woman's parka, with a bugle (a long, clear glass bead) through the cartilage of his nose, with curls of wolverine fur, and bracelets, mocked a woman with inimitable art and humor, as she stirs the tolkusha, as she does various woman's tasks, and at the same time is distracted by other things that come along. The guests were whispering to each other with delight. Finally the dancer threw off his parka and the other decorations in which he had been masquerading, and began very cleverly to represent how the bearded seal is hunted, and how, having capsized, a kayak is righted again. His treat consisted of a whole cooked bearded seal of which I received the throat as my share. Others represented deer hunting, bird hunting, and so forth, and handed out beluga fat, prepared seal intestines for raincoats, reindeer sinew, and boot soles. One young orphan had nothing to offer the people, so he brought a bowl of water, took

a drink, and attempted to throw the rest on the women, but was prevented from doing so. It sometimes happens that a dexterous young gallant at the time of the serving of refreshments will pour over the women either fat or the liquid which the Eskimos use instead of soap. No one gets angry at such pranks. (Lieutenant Zagoskin's Travels in Russian America, 1842-44, edit. by Henry N. Michael. Translations: Russian Sources, Published by University of Toronto Press, 1967.)

19th Century Economic Determinism

The concept of CULTURAL EVOLUTION was the leading philosophical perspective of the latter part of the 19th Century. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels used the work of Lewis H. Morgan as part of the basis for their own model of cultural evolution. In Mexico, dialectical materialism is traditionally included in the philosophical curricula of university anthropology and sociology departments. In the U.S.A., such courses generally have been omitted. There is a tradition within French anthropology for Marxist theory to be included with other approaches. Marxist anthropology emphasizes ECONOMIC DETERMINISM, a philosophical position which states that the technological and economic organization of a culture is the primary determinant of the social structure. This includes all of the major institutional complexes which exist within a society. Thus, population size, political organization, technology, law, art and ritual behavior are all molded by the technological and economic organization of a culture.

Most systems of technological and economic organization are positive in their early or incipient forms. However, as they become static, obstacles and barriers arise

or are created which stifle or discourage new technological and cultural innovations. Eventually pressure on an economic system arises from within; the vested interests of specific categories of people, groups and classes serve as confrontation points. Historical and cultural change cannot stop; thus the barriers to change are overcome and a hybrid economic system results.

In most cultures, there exists a fundamental division between those who embrace the status quo and its traditions, and those who consider another method more viable. All groups experience cultural change. Sometimes the degree of change is so radical that a violent conflict emerges; or, the change may be far more subtle, and gradually undermine the established order. Economic organization is the product of cultural forces: when a culture reaches a specific stage, pressure creates a climate for certain types of action to occur. Some individuals are quicker to perceive and act upon these changes. They stimulate the cultural development of the human group.

A group's economic and technological complexity determines the lifestyle that is available for its members. Economic variability in less complex cultures is primarily directed toward a direct servicing of biological needs. In such groups, nature, as contrasted to anthropomorphic and abstract imagery, is emphasized in ritual and ideology, because natural phenomena have greater visibility in the everyday life cycle of individual group members. As more

complex modes of production evolve, other segments of society pattern themselves accordingly. A clear chain of technological innovation reaches from the earliest technologies to the present. One's cultural heritage is super-organic and cumulative. Cultural differences and similarities exist because the technological and economic systems of cultures exert unique pressures which favor specific types of ideology and organizational structure.

Marx used a conceptual model which was organized around a specific method of viewing cultural change and cultural evolution. The cultural system in his model was divided into three major segments. These consisted of the TECHNOLOGICAL and ECONOMIC SYSTEM, SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, and IDEOLOGICAL BASE of a culture. Ideology and social organization were viewed as responses to conditions which were unique in time and place for each group. Cultural adaptation was viewed from a functional perspective in that specific functions could be attached to both the type of social order and the ideology which emanated from it.

Marx recognized that POSITIVE and NEGATIVE forces operate within a system, exerting pressure either to preserve or to destroy the status quo. He viewed cultural change as unavoidable, believing that one could not alter the move toward change. His recognition of the historical significance of culture over race was acknowledged; biology was not deemed responsible for the variability of culture; it was the mechanism of culture itself, tied to the economic

and technological complex, which explained variability. When Marx proposed this model, lineal evolutionary theories were prevalent; and the significance of his work was ignored. His method of analysis contradicted the prevailing cultural evolutionary theories of the time. Marx provided a framework which opened up economic and technological areas to research; he argued that their basic significance was responsible for the other facets of culture. He designed an approach, not a fully developed model.

Most opponents of economic materialism dismiss it as being too simplistic. However with a careful examination of the interrelationship between the economic and technological realm, and the ideological base and social structure, an incredibly complex picture emerges. Ecological, geographical and population differences form part of the larger system, together with access to raw materials, resources and technological levels. The relationships between these components should not be ignored.

Marx anticipated the complexity of cultural systems, and allowed for the interaction of various elements within a society. The dynamic or core of a culture involves a central focus; Marx considered all the elements as part of the core. In acknowledging this, he also acknowledged that different institutions would arise to exert power and variable influences within a culture. A shallow approach was never involved in his theoretical proposition. Unfortunately, this fact has been lost on his critics; they appear

to have stumbled upon the word "economic" and to have probed no deeper, rather than acknowledging the complexity of his technological-economic model. Cultural anthropologists, economists and sociologists have rediscovered the significance of the dialectical materialist viewpoint. The major 19th Century theorists in cultural anthropology dismissed Marx's theory without testing it through the comparative method; his viewpoint was considered not only invalid but archaic.

FRANZ BOAS

Franz Boas is regarded as one of the most important figures in the development of American anthropology. The list of major anthropologists trained by Boas illustrates his influence. Among his students are such noted anthropologists as Ashley Montague, Margaret Mead, Ruth Bunzel, Jules Henry, Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Edward Sapir, Melville Herskovits, Paul Radin, Ruth Benedict, Adamson Hoebel, Leslie Spier, and Clark Wissler. These students were instrumental in the development of modern American anthropology, a relatively new discipline in the United States, which was not included as a formal university program until late in the 19th Century.

Boas was a prolific writer, he encouraged the establishment of anthropology departments in a number of major universities, helped organize a number of learned societies, rekindled interest and participation in the American Anthropological Association, conducted considerable research and

fieldwork, and carried out administrative tasks both within and outside the discipline. At the same time, he carried out fieldwork with a variety of cultures. Boas emphasized the importance of fieldwork and recording. Anthropologists are trained in the field, and to Boas, there was no substitute for such experience. Some anthropologists have inaccurately described Boas as lacking a methodological perspective beyond fieldwork. He applied a modified NATURAL SCIENCE model to the study of cultures. Boas helped to pioneer the field of ethnolinguistics, and was convinced that culture could be understood or described best using mathematical relationships. His emphasis on the use of statistics has been down-played by many who have perpetuated other aspects of his traditional insight. Perhaps Boas' most notable feat was to sidetrack Marxist social theory. He was able to shift his students' theoretical orientation away from cultural evolution, toward a concentration on fieldwork. Franz Boas was a deeply compassionate scholar; he championed racial equality long before it was fashionable to do so. To Boas, the greatest contribution anthropologists could make was to record cultures before they ceased to exist. He nurtured American anthropology in the early stages.

20th Century Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism as a theoretical perspective developed as a response to the distinct lack of social theory in anthropology. It still serves as the basis for

much of British and French anthropology. The major impetus came from an article published in the American Anthropologist, Vol. 37, July-Sept. 1935, by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN.

To turn from organic life to social life, if we examine such a community as an African or Australian tribe we can recognize the existence of a social structure. Individual human beings, the essential units in this instance, are connected by a definite set of social relations into an integrated whole. The continuity of the social structure, like that of an organic structure, is not destroyed by changes in the units. Individuals may leave the society, by death or otherwise; others may enter it. The continuity of structure is maintained by the process of social life, which consists of the activities and interactions of the individual human beings and the organized groups into which they are united. The social life of the community is here defined as the functioning of the social structure. The function of any recurrent activity, as such as the punishment of a crime, or a funeral ceremony, is the part it plays in the social life as a whole and therefore the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structural continuity.

The concept of function as here defined thus involves the notion of a structure consisting of a set of relations amongst unit entities, the continuity of the structure being maintained by a life-process made up of the activities of the constituent units.

The premise behind functionalism is that each culture is made up of traits or components which fit into a larger unit. Functionalist studies concentrate on the overall function which the traits serve within the larger culture. To functionalists, research on traits, without some connection to the whole, is counterproductive and generally useless. A major difficulty arises in that larger cultures contain numerous traits; complex reliance on a functionalist position would be impossible in many contemporary societies--the sheer number of traits preclude it. Perhaps functionalism is best suited in its theoretical ideal, which permits

behavior which might appear eccentric, odd or worse to be viewed as serving a useful purpose. Some anthropologists argue that the functionalist approach is circular, that everything and anything can be defined as functional. They ask how one can really understand the dynamics of a culture using mere functionality as a guide.

During the first half of the 20th Century, B. MALINOWSKI and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown were major Western proponents of functionalism. One of the major insights delivered by Malinowski and not heeded to this day by governments and other complex institutions, is that change within a culture creates a rippling effect. It eventually goes beyond its original destination or intent and alters the total culture. This acknowledgment of a larger system and its elements was a major theoretical step. Malinowski tended to emphasize the BIOLOGICAL components which must be satisfied in order for life to continue. He used these as starting blocks for examining the larger culture. Radcliffe-Brown, the other major proponent of functionalism, tended to emphasize the role of the overall SOCIAL STRUCTURE and its effect upon the individual. The structural functionalists, as they were called, were critical of the theoretical positions of the cultural evolutionists, historical reconstructionalists, and the strictly descriptive ethnographers of the time. Malinowski's approach to functionalism examined the effect of a trait upon the other traits and the system, the role played by a trait in promoting cohesiveness, and the relation

of a trait to positive or negative behavior within the system. Most structural functionalists have historically avoided making judgments about the relative morality involved in certain situations. Functionalism as an approach is still widely accepted within contemporary anthropology.

French Structuralism

FRENCH STRUCTURALISM was configured in a distinct format. CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS is generally credited as being the leading structuralist within French anthropology. Importantly, ROUSSEAU, the noted French philosopher, was cited by Strauss as his intellectual beacon. It was in the area of cognition that Strauss posited a number of theories. He argued that humankind's evolutionary journey was mirrored in its social institutions. ALTRUISTIC behavior was identified as a higher level of cognitive development which set humans apart from animal forms. Yet, altruistic behavior and the ability to feel compassion or empathy were linked to the formation of early ritual and belief systems which attempted to control nature.

In another vein, a daring methodological approach to anthropological research was proposed by Strauss; it was unique. He suggested that all field workers were influenced by the inner core of their personalities. In order to record reality, it would be important to understand the hidden traits which comprise one's own personality. To Strauss, the process of introspection became crucial to the

development of anthropological models. Strauss acknowledged the role of the subjective and attempted to overcome this human weakness.

French structuralism and dialectical materialism are differentiated by his emphasis upon an unconscious INFRA-STRUCTURE. Strauss felt that the creation of art operates on two distinct levels: one level serves the needs of the individual, the other the needs of society. Art is looked upon as a desire to create something that is both a part of nature and is somehow distinct from nature. French structuralism acknowledged that art was the product of two forces; however both were also manipulated not only by the individual but also by inner forces which were carried by the individual and the culture. Since art was partially controlled by the unconscious, observation was deemed problematic.

Strauss realized that an unconscious level of evolutionary structure posed insurmountable problems for fieldworkers. This level could not be directly observed, only its influence could be seen.

Telhard De Chardin espoused the same perspective in a number of his philosophical and theological works. It was this perspective of an unconscious level which led to his affirmation of the relationship between 20th Century Catholic theology which believed in the uniqueness of human creation, and evolutionary theory from the biological world. Chardin argued that humans had evolved a higher level of

consciousness than animals and that this structure separated them from lower forms of life. At the same time, Jung postulated his collective unconscious. He stipulated that the memories of all evolution and perhaps all experiences were carried by humans (deep within). Strauss, when viewed against the backdrop of Chardin and Jung, does not appear isolated.

ALFRED L. KROEBER

A. L. Kroeber was one of the most influential American anthropologists. Kroeber took his graduate training under Boas at Columbia University, and spent his academic teaching career at the University of California. The anthropology department at U.C. Berkeley is internationally recognized: its graduates are Kroeber's legacy. One of Kroeber's main tenets involved the significance of culture; to Kroeber, the individual was at the will of a larger force--culture. He used statistical methods to examine cultural complexity by measuring the number of traits found--the greater the number, the greater the complexity. His major work on California Indians, Handbook of the Indians of California, is a classic. Though out of print, it is still much in demand by anthropologists; this attests to its continuing usefulness.

Kroeber outlined the relationship between ecological factors and cultural adaptation. He saw the ecological base as underlying the specific culture areas which he helped to define. Northwest Coast culture, Plains culture,

and Woodland culture, are terms which reflect similarities of cultures which adapted to specific habitats. Those who lived within a geographic region tended to resemble one another culturally more than those who lived in other areas. Kroeber sought to define the focal point of culture areas by measuring traits and examining areas where traits were heaviest. The use of statistics for this purpose had been pioneered by earlier anthropologists, yet Kroeber gave this methodology a unique vitality. His development of the superorganic concept beyond what 19th Century evolutionists had postulated served as a model for cultural determinism.

20th Century Cross-Cultural Studies

Comparative cultural analysis was pioneered by several late 19th Century anthropologists. However, except for a few scattered examples in the 1920's, the approach was effectively blocked within American anthropology until G. P. MURDOCK founded the Human Relations Area Files at Yale University in 1931. The H.R.A.F. contain information about cultures which is classified into units so that cultures can be examined cross-culturally for basic similarities of structure. Originally, the data was contained on index cards; later it was placed on microfilm. In some cases the material is now in computer storage. The object of cross-cultural study is to find universal behavior patterns which are common to all societies.

UNIVERSAL CATEGORIES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Speech

kinship nomenclature
personal names

Subsistence

cooking
ethnobotany
feasting
mealtimes
trade

Material Culture

bodily adornment
firemaking
housing
tool making

ArtSupernatural

divination
faith healing
funeral rites
magic
mourning
propitiation of
supernatural beings
religious ritual
soul concepts

Society

age-grade
athletic sports
cleanliness training
cooperative labor
courtship
dancing
division of labor
education
etiquette
family organization
games
gestures
gift giving
greetings
hair styles
hospitality
hygiene
joking

Society (continued)

kin-groups
marriage
marriage residence
modesty
puberty customs
sexual restrictions
status differentiation
visiting
weaning

Knowledge (scientific,
folk, mythological)

calendar
cosmology
dream interpretation
eschatology
ethics
folklore
taboos (incest, food)
luck superstitions
medicine
music
mythology
numerals
obstetrics
postnatal care
pregnancy usages
surgery
weather control

Property

interitance rules
property rights

Government

community organization
penal sanctions
law

Violence

feuds

(taken from: Other People,
Other Customs. Holt,
Rhinehart and Winston,
1972)

Tremendous opposition to the H.R.A.F. arose from anthropologists who argued that the size of the sample, differences in ethnographies and ethnographers, and other temporal differences would invalidate the attempted reconstructions of traditional cultures. The primary opposition came from those who were closely aligned with the Boasian school. Cross-cultural comparison of specific categories is facilitated by the H.R.A.F.; however, the value of the end product is only as good as the data base. If the data base contains errors, the entire result will be skewed toward the error. Murdock and others attempted to exercise a degree of control over the data base, and utilize a method whereby the same base could be examined by different scholars. They attempted to create a semblance of a standardized laboratory situation. Murdock's approach has a great deal of validity. Most errors within the data base that relate to excerpting are probably random, and therefore are probably no greater than the errors in individual attempts at cross-cultural comparison. The validity persists when ethnographies from different time periods are compared: the resultant reconstructions are no more invalid than the reconstructions of anthropologists working alone. In fact, the H.R.A.F. is probably more accurate because of the number of anthropologists who have contributed to its selection and excerpting process. Their participation has served as a check against individual distortion.

MARGARET MEAD

Margaret Mead was perhaps the most well known anthropologist of the twentieth century. She was a fieldworker, author, lecturer and teacher both on and off the academic circuit. Margaret Mead entered anthropology at a time when women were not represented in large numbers within the discipline. Her major contributions revolve not around abstract theory, although many of her articles and books set new vistas for expanded research opportunities, but more importantly around the joy or value of the anthropological enterprise. Mead captured the imagination of untold millions over a span of fifty years by making anthropology comprehensible to the average person who read popular articles, listened to radio or watched television. She encouraged anthropologists to educate the general public.

In the 1920's, she envisaged anthropological research as a team endeavor rather than a single enterprise. A team was thought to give the best opportunity for research of a lasting nature, because of the number of cultural facets which could be explored. As a consequence, Mead and Gregory Bateson uncovered patterns of child rearing in Bali via participant observation. The role of a female perspective within anthropology was championed by her articulate presentations. Her awareness of the limitations which one male or female anthropologist can bring to his/her research was expressed. The data which was garnered during her long fieldwork in the South Pacific assured her that puberty was

not always a painful process when viewed cross-culturally. This countered some of the psychoanalytic approaches of the day. Her clarity of expression was matched by her ability to ascertain the level of the audience which she addressed. Publications, both professional and popular, were too numerous to list; one need only use an author card file to summon up something that she conceived. It is fair to state that Margaret Mead was one of the most important figures in American anthropology.

GREGORY BATESON

Gregory Bateson is famous for his research in the area of cognition and communication. He was able to perceive patterns of non-verbal communication when a number of scholars were oblivious to the reality of reinforcement. One of his most interesting studies took place in the 1940's at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco. There he sought to ascertain whether non-verbal cues were given off by families who had one member who was severely disturbed. Films were taken of family meetings, without sound and with an emphasis upon all members. Psychiatric specialists and others were then asked to identify normal and abnormal families on the basis of the patterns. In almost all instances, the family with a serious disturbance stood out from the normal families. It appeared that "well" family members within the disturbed unit or family reinforced the illness of the sick individual. Bateson and others then began to research methodologies which could

sustain treatment of the entire unit. He made the analogy that a family was somewhat akin to a cultural group; thus, to treat persons and place them in the same cultural context was self-defeating because the old cues were still there to trigger the old responses.

Bateson showed the relationship between values and perception; this was an important theoretical perspective which anticipated by many years some of the more contemporary theories of cognition. Perception was always influenced by value, while belief reinforces the truth of what we have seen and what we are supposed to see. In other words, we act in regards to what we know . . . and when we act, we will meet with frustration and pain if things are not as we know them to be. Bateson is generally acknowledged as one of the finest minds in Western academia.

ROBERT REDFIELD

Robert Redfield, an influential anthropologist within the context of the 1950's, stressed the concept of worldview--a term that has come to mean a person's or a culture's view of the world. Redfield's definition includes the cultural perceptions which are shared by members of a society. Themes or patterns of perception are said to exist for all groups. Redfield stated:

Worldview is the picture the members of a society have or the properties and characters upon their stage of action.

In other words, worldview relates to the way men/women in a particular society see themselves in relation to all

else. It is as Redfield termed it, a man's idea of the universe. Oscar Lewis and Redfield disagreed over the significance of worldview. This culminated in a controversial study of a Mexican community within a short period of time by both anthropologists. Redfield perceived a generalized sense of fatalism and an absorption with evil, death, and magic. Lewis countered that Redfield's worldview was based upon idiosyncratic problems based upon Redfield's inability to penetrate the culture. He went so far as to intimate that Redfield had been partially rejected and that his fieldwork was influenced by the trauma. The long-term disagreement between these anthropologists concerning the applicability of worldview focused attention toward the relativity of conceptual frameworks.

OSCAR LEWIS

One of the more interesting approaches to fieldwork and theory in the last 25 years was developed by Oscar Lewis. The use of personal autobiographies was integral to his approach. In order to obtain life histories, he utilized tape recorders in his fieldwork. Lewis focused on attempting to capture an accurate ethnographic cut--a slice which displays the essential aspects of a culture. Lewis utilized the anthropological novel to construct images of a culture and its people based upon his field observations and experiences. The use of fiction to capture the essence of cultural experience is a valid approach. La Vida, Children of Sanchez and Five Families are a few of Lewis'

most popular works. He was drawn to the barrios and villas of Mexican and Latino ghettos long before other Western anthropologists were ready to acknowledge that sub-cultures within full-fledged cultures existed. Within Mexico his works are widely distributed and respected. What Lewis attempted to develop was a method whereby the dynamics of family life would serve as the focal point from which to view the larger culture.

The following is representative of one of Lewis' most famous works. In it the culture comes alive and one can almost experience the scene which is so graphically portrayed.

From the paved road Esperanza made another left turn and walked quickly past a few more houses, past the park, and across the plaza to the archway where the women waited in the shade to sell their little piles of food. From them Esperanza carefully made her small purchases--one-fourth of a kilo of rice at thirty-five centavos, ten centavos' worth of coffee, fifteen centavos' worth of lard, fifteen centavos for tomatoes, and twenty for chile. The rice and lard were wrapped in little cones of paper which Esperanza placed along with the other articles in the basket which she carried under her shawl. She then went into one of the small dark stores under the archway and bought one-tenth of a liter of drinking alcohol and twenty centavos' worth of kerosene for the lamp. On the way home she stopped at the drugstore for two aspirin.

The noon church bells were ringing when she reached home after the long climb up the hill. Without sitting down to rest she gave the basket of food to Machrina, took up the can of boiled corn, and hurried back to the plaza, this time to the corn mill. The corn was still too hot to be ground but it was already late, and even though the dough would be tough and rubbery it was needed for the noon meal for those at home. Machrina had put aside some corn to cool for the evening meal. It meant another trip to the mill but that was better than giving the men inferior tortillas. Like all men, they had bad tempers and had to be served properly.

Esperanza looked expectantly at the mill entrance to see who was waiting there. She enjoyed standing in the long queue; it was one of her few chances to chat with

the women she knew. But at this hour the mill was empty and the miller put her corn through the noisy machine without delay. (Oscar Lewis, Five Families. Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1959, p. 54)

Lewis' recognition of a "culture of poverty" was perhaps one of the major anthropological feats of the 1960's; it was an acknowledgment of the pervasive superorganic quality of poverty for many sub-cultural groups. His work helped to stimulate interest by anthropologists and others in this area of research and, indirectly, in social action. This approach allowed many of Lewis' successors to gain acceptance for anthropological research within their own cultures.

Theoretically, it is possible to credit Lewis with innovation in fieldwork and reporting methodology. Some regarded him as a "pop" anthropologist and author, rather than as a scientist; to others he was an anthropologist who brought feeling and emotion to his anthropological novels, and captured the spirit of the cultures he described.

Anthropology today is open to differing philosophical positions. The influence of international philosophical movements, and the proliferation of media and communication within the field, have helped relax some of the more rigid methodological and philosophical orientations. Previous problems of crystallization and dogma within anthropology centered around the uniqueness of the discipline and the limited number of anthropologists. When anthropology was like a small club, social control was applied to resolve differences. One either conformed to the group's perspective,

or one did not obtain the support of peers. As the discipline has increased in size and scope, it has broadened into an eclectic field in which different perspectives are allowed, and the contributions of earlier theorists are acknowledged. Although it is still possible to find "true believers" in various schools, it is now equally evident that many anthropologists are trying to take the best from all the philosophical approaches.

Performance Activities

Please fill in the blanks:

1. A used the term anthropology to describe what he believed was the underlying moral nature of man.
2. H was credited with being the founder of history, geography and anthropology.
3. The R were more interested in engineering and military science than anthropology.
4. During the D Ages, Arabic scholars were more advanced than their Western counterparts.
5. Ibn Fadhlin's account of V settlers within Kiev, Russia contained valuable information.
6. C and war were the primary vehicles for increased Western contact with the East.
7. Western V of discovery heightened interest in other lands.
8. The noted priest Bernadino De Sahagun recorded the culture of the A.
9. J relations contains descriptions of many non-Western societies which did not survive until the present.
10. During the 19th Century, E museums formed; these were used to store cultural descriptions.
11. The ethnographic description of the men's evening party by Lt. Zagoskin was an example of objective E research.
12. In Mexico, dialectical M is traditionally included in university programs in sociology and anthropology.
13. E determinism relates the technological and economic organization of a culture to social structure.
14. A group's E and technological complexity determines the life-style that is available.

15. Marx saw three components of cultural systems. The first was the T _____ and Economic System.
16. The second was the Social O _____.
17. The third was the I _____ Base of a culture.
18. Marx also recognized that P _____ and negative forces operate within a system.
19. Franz B _____ is regarded as one of the most important figures in the development of American anthropology.
20. His S _____ were instrumental in the development of modern American anthropology.
21. Boas emphasized the importance of F _____.
22. He applied a N _____ science model to the study of cultures.
23. Boas was able to side-track M _____ theory by shifting his students away from cultural evolution.
24. Structural F _____ was and is a major conceptual viewpoint within contemporary anthropology.
25. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown was a leading proponent of B _____ structuralism.
26. Brown emphasized the importance of social S _____.
27. B. Malinowski emphasized B _____ needs as important elements.
28. F _____ Structuralism was configured largely through the perceptions of Claude Levi-Strauss.
29. R _____, the noted French philosopher, was cited by Strauss as his intellectual beacon.
30. A _____ behavior was identified by Strauss as belonging to humans.
31. Strauss felt that the creation of A _____ operates on two distinct levels.
32. Alfred K _____ was one of the most influential American anthropologists; he helped to develop the anthropology department at the University of California at Berkeley.

33. Kroeber outlined the relationship between ecological factors and C _____ adaptation.
34. The Human R _____ Area Files were founded by George Peter Murdock at Yale University circa 1931.
35. The files contain examples of cultural U _____.
36. Margaret M _____ was perhaps the most well known anthropologist of the twentieth century.
37. Gregory B _____ is famous for his research in the area of cognition and communication.
38. Robert Redfield formulated the concept of W _____.
39. Oscar L _____ utilized the anthropological novel to record the ethos of a culture.

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES
OCT 25 1985

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